Street Smarts: All Is Well?

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Boyd Camak, hypocrite with logs in my eyes. (Matthew 7:3-5) Admiring the counterintuitive way. (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

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I wanted to say a few words about the idea that all is well, all is well.

Point number one, it's common to hear people in the spiritual world say that everything's okay, all is well, don't worry.

And if you just look at the world the way it is, that's wishful thinking, that's denial.

Bad things happen every day, look at the news, or better yet, look at the news carefully with others in your faith community and think about ways you can respond to it.

But clearly, all is not well and it's tempting to listen to spiritual cleverness that tries to anesthetize us from this reality.

Two, what does the Christian faith have to say about this?

Well, the first thing it has to say is that not only is all not well, but it can't get any worse.

In fact, it's so bad that God's children crucified, tortured, God himself, and God died.

It doesn't get any worse than that.

Three, after God died, something weird happened and there are a lot of conflicting reports about what happened, even within the scriptures, even within the Bible itself, there are different conflicting reports about exactly what happened.

But for my money, what I look to is this outlandish claim that Jesus was raised from the dead.

And not only is that story still hanging around, but lots and lots of people then and now were and are willing to be tortured and killed rather than deny it.

So Jesus is still alive, and by alive, I mean literally alive, and it doesn't matter whether you believe Jesus is literally sitting on a cloud, or my view is he's kind of in a, there's kind of a greater reality.

The reality that we're in is part of a larger reality, and that Jesus is certainly in our reality, but he's also inhabiting a greater reality that is bigger and grander and more comprehensive than the reality that we're in.

And that's more along the lines of what the Church Fathers believed, and I think it's also more in line with what modern cosmology tells us, but I'm getting a little bit out of my expertise there.

But Jesus is still alive, so it doesn't matter if you're liberal or conservative regarding the Bible interpretation, we can all agree that Jesus is still alive literally, not just symbolically, although he is alive symbolically too, because his literal being aliveness is also a symbol.

It's more than a symbol in the sense that it relates and has relevance to understanding other things, but it's not just an abstract concept.

And what does Jesus aliveness mean?

What does it literally mean?

It means that there's nothing we can do to kill God permanently, and there's nothing we can do to make God stop loving us.

It means that God is in the trenches with us.

He's willing to get ***way*** down into the trenches by letting us kill him.

He's with us.

He can experience death, he can experience our lot, but we cannot cancel his love.

And for those of us who are a little bit iffy about this idea of resurrection, not in terms of if it can happen, but in terms of if we wanted it to happen, if you're a pessimist or maybe you're struggling with depression and the idea of eternal life sounds a little bit horrible, well, that's where I come back to my view of the resurrection, which is that if I could understand it, in other words, any concept of resurrection that I could conceive of that contained any of my life experience in this world, that's not something I would want to eternalize.

And there's a respected theologian that I won't name because I don't want to misquote him, but I don't think he's the first person to say this, and I think this is probably something that we assume too when we think about eternal life, but if there's going to be any *me* on the other side of eternity, in other words, if I'm going to be eternalized, if my life is going to be eternalized, then it's going to have to be *my* life, which has a lot of bullshit in it, has a lot of pain in it, and I don't want that eternalized.

Not if that means I have to keep experiencing it for eternity or thinking about it for eternity.

Or going to therapy for it for eternity, but yet if I sweep the decks and dust everything away and get rid of everything, then it's how is it *me* at all?

Well, let me cut to the chase.

My view is that I cannot get an answer to that question, and I don't want an answer to that question because any question, any answer rather that explains to me why heaven is going to be great, is necessarily not good enough.

That's where faith comes in.

And as one brilliant theologian said, Christian faith cannot be contained within human reason, and I think that's a feature, not a bug, because if I'm a drowning man, if I'm existentially drowning, if I could think up a life ring, I wouldn't need faith.

If I'm drowning, that means I need a life ring.

That means I need Jesus.

In other words, I need something that I don't understand because everything that I do understand is leading me to despair, is leading me to distraction, maybe for some of us it's substance abuse or it's family patterns that we can't escape because they're so ingrained or whatever.

But basically, we come face to face with the idea that all is not well.

But we can have cheer, we can have hope, that's what Christian hope is about.

That's not the end of the story.

We can have resurrection.

That's why Easter is actually good news, although I wrote a whole article as I said about it called, Why Easter Is Not a Tragedy.

Well, it's not a tragedy.

And it’s not a tragedy because it’s not just one more thing that I can think of, which is going to always give way to despair.

It’s something much bigger than that, it’s something much bolder than that, and it’s something that people have been willing to be martyred for from the beginning.

And as I heard at the Greek Orthodox Church, *Christos Anesti!, Christos Anesti!*, I think that means, I hope I pronounced it right, it means Christ is risen, and it doesn’t just mean Christ is risen when the Easter Bunny comes around and the flowers bloom, it means that Christ is risen right now, even if it’s the middle of December.

Christ has risen and all is well, and we can say that all is well, not because we’re closing our eyes to reality, but because we have a Savior, and we don’t understand it all, and we don’t need to understand it all, and we don’t want to understand it all.

And that is good news. That is damn good news. God bless.

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